

# Farnham Common Junior School

Sherbourne Walk, Farnham Common, Slough, SL2 3TZ

## Inspection dates

20–21 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher works closely with the assistant headteachers to improve teaching and pupils' achievement. She has galvanised the staff and is successfully taking the school forward.
- Pupils achieve well. Standards in tests at the end of Year 6 in 2013 were significantly above the national average, as they had been in the previous two years.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- Much of the teaching is good. There is some outstanding practice on which the school can build.
- Pupils behave well, feel safe and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Their attendance is above average.
- The governing body has managed the many changes in staffing well. Governors set challenging targets but at the same time are supportive of the senior leadership team.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some pupils in Years 3 and 4 are not developing their mathematical skills quickly enough.
- Occasionally teachers do not plan sufficiently challenging work that builds on pupils' earlier learning.
- The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. In some classes pupils are not given clear guidance on how to improve.
- The school development plan lacks clear targets by which leaders can judge the success of planned improvement strategies

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons, of which five were observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made a number of shorter visits to lessons and heard some pupils in Year 6 read.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe and the school development plan.
- In making their judgements, inspectors took account of the 81 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire and 14 questionnaires returned by members of staff.

## Inspection team

David Wynford Jones, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Janet Simms

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is similar in size to the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritage is slightly higher than that found in most schools.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average. None are currently at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion identified for additional support through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is well below average. This is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those who are looked after by the local authority, and other eligible groups.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher and the assistant headteachers are recent appointments. The headteacher became the substantive head during the spring term 2014. She was previously the deputy headteacher at the school and was acting headteacher for the autumn term 2013. One assistant headteacher is an established member of the staff; the second joined the school in January 2014.
- Most of the other teachers have joined the school during this academic year.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards even higher by:
  - giving pupils in Years 3 and 4 more opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills in solving problems and carrying out investigations
  - ensuring that pupils fully understand what they are expected to achieve in each lesson
  - making certain that all teachers mark pupils' work regularly and give them clear guidance on how to improve their work.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
  - ensuring that all class teachers make good use of information on pupils' progress to adjust their teaching, especially where pupils may be falling behind
  - ensuring that leaders, managers and governors determine precise and measurable targets, linked to pupils' attainment and progress, by which to evaluate the impact of their work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils have responded well to the significant changes in teaching staff and in the leadership of the school. They say that the changes have brought new life to their learning and as a result they are enjoying school and want to learn more. This is reflected in their accelerated progress.
- Assessment records and work in pupils' books show that, in this academic year, most pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- From an above-average starting point on entry to Year 3, most pupils are moving forward and developing their reading, writing and mathematical skills well. Standards in Year 6 are above those expected for the age and many are working at well above the expected level. This represents good progress and achievement.
- Pupils read fluently and achieve well above average standards. Pupils in Year 6 read widely. They share their views on books and different authors and are able to explain their likes and dislikes clearly. They use a good range of strategies to tackle unfamiliar words.
- Pupils' skills in writing are also developing well. Their knowledge and use of grammar, punctuation and their ability to spell well are evident in their written tasks and reflect the diversity of their reading materials. Pupils' writing is brought to life by the good use of adjectives, similes and metaphors. There are many opportunities for pupils to write in different subjects and apply their skills to a variety of topics.
- In mathematics, pupils have a good understanding of number and of mathematical terminology. Year 6 pupils are developing their skills of investigating and applying their mathematical skills to different problems well. For example, a group were involved in planning 'the first moon theme park'. This involved considering facilities, attractions and costings. However, in Years 3 and 4 pupils are not as confident in using their mathematical knowledge to investigate and solve problems.
- In 2013, pupils supported by additional funding did not do as well in tests at the end of Year 6 as other pupils in the school. They were about two years behind their peers in mathematics and about eighteen months behind in reading and writing. In these two subjects, however, their attainment was at the same level as that of similar pupils nationally. Current school data suggests that the gap in performance between eligible pupils in the current Year 6 and their classmates is closing. This is because their progress is now being carefully monitored and additional help, if needed, is being provided promptly. The additional funding is being used well to provide further support for literacy and numeracy.
- Good support for pupils who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs helps them make similar progress to their classmates. All staff strive to ensure that all pupils are fully included and have equal access to the same learning opportunities as other pupils. Their progress is checked regularly and they are given extra help to boost their progress if needed. The school is committed to equality of opportunity.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Much of the teaching is good and occasionally outstanding. There is no inadequate teaching. As a result, pupils are making good progress in English and mathematics. This is reflected in their good achievement.
- The large majority of teachers are relatively new to the school. They have settled in well, formed good relationships with the pupils and are working together effectively as a team. Teaching assistants support work in small groups effectively and help the pupils to make good progress.
- Teachers' expectations are high. Lessons are mostly well planned to meet the needs of pupils at different levels of attainment.

- Most teachers use questioning skilfully to check and develop pupils' learning. Teachers generally manage pupils' behaviour well and encourage them to share their ideas with each other and with the adults.
- In the occasional lesson some pupils do not make rapid progress. This is because teachers do not make the best use of information about pupils' previous learning to challenge all pupils. Although all teachers identify and share the 'must, could and should' targets with the class, they do not routinely remind pupils, who are working at different levels, what is expected of them. As a result, a few do not always produce their best work.
- There are some good examples of marking where teachers explain clearly how pupils should improve their work. A few teachers do not mark pupils' work thoroughly enough. Consequently, some pupils feel disappointed when they have tried hard in lessons. Even where marking is at its best there is limited evidence of teachers checking that pupils have followed previous advice.
- Teachers encourage pupils to read widely and to use these skills to support their learning in other subjects. In the past, pupils made better progress in English than in mathematics. Teachers have reviewed the way that pupils are taught and have correctly identified that pupils in Years 3 and 4 are not given enough opportunities to develop their skills in investigating and solving mathematical problems.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils typically behave well in lessons and around the school. They want to learn and work with sustained concentration for most of the time. Pupils' attendance is above average.
- Pupils are proud of their school and are polite and well mannered in the way they speak to adults and to each other. Displays and equipment are treated with respect. There is no litter or graffiti.
- In a small minority of lessons, some pupils lose concentration and talk to one another instead of getting on with the tasks they have been set. This is because the teachers have not made it clear what they expect pupils to achieve by the end of the lesson.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying, for example name-calling, fighting, racial bullying, or religious intolerance. They say that incidents of inappropriate behaviour are rare and are confident that any misbehaviour will be dealt with swiftly and fairly by staff. There have been no reported racist incidents or exclusions since the previous inspection.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school meets the requirements for safeguarding. A member of the governing body checks to make certain that procedures are followed and the site is safe.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They are aware of potential dangers when using the internet, cycling on main roads or when taking part in the wide range of sporting activities.
- Pupils have responded positively to the additional sporting opportunities financed by the additional sports funding allowance. They have acquired a better understanding of how sport, diet and safety awareness contribute to healthy living. Pupils regularly take part in inter-school athletics, football and netball tournaments, cross-country running and local and national table tennis matches.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- Working closely with the governing body and the assistant headteachers, the headteacher has successfully steered the school through a period of staffing instability. She has ensured that teachers new to the school have settled quickly and become members of an effective team raising standards and accelerating pupils' progress.
- Procedures for checking on pupils' attainment and progress have been reviewed and more

rigorous monitoring introduced. The frequency of checking on the progress of potentially vulnerable pupils has been increased. Teachers are asked to explain if any pupil is falling behind and what they intend to do about it. This has helped to improve pupils' progress.

- Lessons are observed and teachers are given feedback on the strengths and areas to develop. The headteacher uses this information well to identify courses for staff to attend and also to keep the governing body informed of the quality of teaching and the standards pupils achieve.
- The assistant headteachers and subject leaders are developing their roles well and make a positive contribution to the leadership of the school. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and where improvements are needed.
- Senior leaders check pupils' assessment information but have yet to ensure that all teachers use the information effectively to check on the progress of pupils in their class, to adjust their teaching and to target pupils who might be in danger of not making rapid progress.
- The school development plan is based on a secure analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, it does not include measurable targets for improvement in pupils' attainment and progress, making it difficult for senior leaders and the governing body to check on the impact and effectiveness of the planned actions.
- In all classes, there is a strong focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers in the same year group work closely together to plan work and ensure consistent approaches. Pupils' learning in other subjects is brought together well through themes and topics which capture their interest. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Good relationships are promoted within the school. Discrimination of any sort is not tolerated.
- Parents' and carers' views of the school are improving. Analysis of the returns on Parent View shows that there is an improving trend. Much has been accomplished over the last six months but there is still work to be done to ensure that all parents are fully supportive of the school.
- The local authority has provided good support. Officers have supported the governing body in appointing staff, worked with the headteacher to induct and monitor new teachers, and have undertaken a review of the teaching of mathematics.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governors have a good overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are supportive of the school and senior leaders but at the same time ask questions to ensure they have the full picture. Governors attend courses and have undertaken training on interpreting and using school information about pupils' attainment and progress. Governors check the school's spending at least termly and make sure that additional funding is spent as intended. The primary sports funding is being used appropriately to employ specialist sports staff, for training teachers and extending the range of after-school sports clubs. As a result, staff are more confident in teaching a range of sports and pupils are eager to become involved. A governor has been allocated the task of checking closely on the progress and standards reached by pupils who are eligible for additional government funding. Governors have set the headteacher challenging targets. They know how targets are set for teachers to improve and understand the process for rewarding good teaching. They know where teaching is consistently good and where additional support is needed.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110265
<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	432075

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	231
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Brenda Cox
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christine Salter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9–10 June 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01753 642923
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